

Jon Thomas Rowland

gratified that somebody wanted it even more than themselves....

Trixie cackled gleefully and Praetorius peeled rubber as he drove their van back and forth across the madly screaming form....

Some kinda WE.I.R.D.O., Trixie observed as the wallowing van pulled away....

He needs MEDICAL ATTENTION....

Right on cue, a service-vehicle with an enormous GARBAGE sign pulled up on the sidewalk, but instead of the usual goons a dapper figure in corduroy and tweed stepped gingerly from the cab. He wore patent leather Dix, and a pencil-thin moustache, like John Waters, or Tennessee Williams....

Sorry to do this to you, JOHNNY!

It was Marek Finkelburgher....

Please sir, sign this waiver....

I, I d-don't kn-now, he stammered. It looked distinctly like a contract, exclusive rights for Thing Street Asylum....

Otherwise, we can't CURE you....

How like Finkelburgher, to offer him a quill pen. He dipped it into the little pool of his own blood, coagulating on the curb....

He signed.

They hopped into the idling garbage truck, and sped off down Thing Street, splitting their guts, belly-laughing....

With painful slowness Johnny Boy pulled himself erect, brushing off leaves and remnants of old Shagburchers that still adhered to his clothing, warm with bloody vomit....

He saw stars....

He told him he'd find him....

Next time they'd go to Niagara Falls....

These texts depict the North American birth of the clinic, not the austere Foucauldian clinic of the 19th-century, but the modern Thing Street facility, with advanced power to generate, however crudely, the knowledge that not only enhances its power but also disseminates it.

Of this phenomenon it is appropriate to ask, as Foucault does of the 18th-century clinic, whether one can rightfully transform into an object of clinical observation a patient whose poverty has compelled him to seek assistance (Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception*, Trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), 83), or whether it is not a tacit form of violence ... upon a sick body that demands to be comforted, not displayed (84).

The latter question dogs not only C.K. Sharke's vociferations in the name of the Asylum on behalf of the clinic, but also the rhetoric of his predecessors, George Hamilton Park, Daniel Clark, and above all, Joseph Workman, Sharke's mentor as well as predecessor. In their various arguments, in pamphlets, articles, and annual reports these doctors continually display the bodies of the sick, to no good effect.

Ironically, instead of the dense and wealthy population of a metropolitan city, which the